

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 SAM-01 MC-02 ACDA-19 IO-14 SY-04 OPR-02

DRC-01 /135 W

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R 150645Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3035

S E C R E T DACCA 2158

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, BG

SUBJ: AN INDICATION OF BDG ARMY DISCONTENT

REF: A) DACCA 1817 B) DACCA 3156 OF 1973

1. THE EVENING OF MAY 13 MAJOR SYED FAROOQ RAHMAN, FIRST BENGAL LANCERS AND SECOND IN COMMAND OF ARMORED CORPS, CALLED UN-ANNOUNCED AT HOME OF PAO GRESHAM. RAHMAN SAID THAT THE ARMY IS VERY DISSATISFIED WITH BDG, ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING RECENT INSTRUCTION FROM THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IN THE COURSE OF CURRENT OPERATIONS THE ARMY MUST NOT ARREST THE AWAMI LEAGUE LEADERSHIP (SEE REF A). RAHMAN SAID HE HAD COME "AT THE INSTANCE OF THE HIGHEST RANKING BANGLADESH ARMY OFFICER" TO ASCERTAIN WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF USG WOULD BE TOWARD ANY TAKEOVER OF BDG, AND IN PARTICULAR WOULD USG BE ABLE TO SEE TO IT THAT THERE WAS NO FOREIGN INTERFERENCE. GRESHAM TOLD MAJOR RAHMAN THAT THE US WOULD NOT IN ANY WAY INTERVENE IN THE AFFAIRS OF BANGLADESH AND THAT THE USG RECOGNIZES THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. MEMCON WILL BE POUCHED.

2. COMMENT: MAJOR RAHMAN MADE A SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL APPROACH TO US LAST SUMMER INQUIRING ABOUT US ARMS POLICY AND SALES TO BANGLADESH (REF B). HE IS NOT IN COMMAND POSITION NOR DOES THE ARMORED CORPS PRESENTLY HAVE ANY ARMOR. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME IN THE PAST

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TWO YEARS THAT REPORTS OF ARMY DISSATISFACTION AND TALK OF COUPS HAVE

REACHED EMBASSY. NONE OF PREVIOUS REPORTS CAME TO FRUITION, NOR DO WE ANTICIPATE THAT ANY MILITARY MOVE IS NOW IMMINENT.

3. WHAT RAHMAN'S VISIT DOES INDICATE IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH MUJIB CONTROLS THE ACTIONS OF THE MILITARY DEPLOYED IN THE CURRENT CLEAN SP CAMPAIGN. THE ARMY, OPERATING ON ITS ORIGINAL ORDERS OF AN IMPARTIAL ROUND UP, ARRESTED A NUMBER OF HIGH RANKING BENGALEES, PARTICULARLY IN COMILLA. THE RESULTING HOWLS OF ANGU AT A MARATHON PARTY MEETING IN DACCA LED MUJIB TO BACK OFF AND ORDER PARTY LEADERSHIP TO BE LEFT ALONE. HE DID PERMIT, HOWEVER, THE SUSPENSION OF WOMAN MP BEGUM MUMTAZ FOR ANTI-PARTY ACTIVITIES. EVEN IF MUJIB HAS DECIDED TO CONTINUE PROTECTING HIS COLLEAGUES, HE AT LEAST HAS FRIGHTENED BADLY THE MORE CORRUPT BY ALLOWING THE ARMY TO GO AS FAR AS IT DID INITIALLY.
BOSTER

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NNN

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